



The Friends of the Handicapped host another successful Sweetheart's Dinner Dance

For over twenty years, a group of regular island visitors owning timesharing at the Aruba Beach Club and Casa Del Mar have worked tirelessly to raise funds that they donate to various foundations on the island devoted to the care of the physically and mentally challenged. Their organization is called "The Friends of the Handicapped" and their Superbowl parties and Valentine's Day fundraisers are required part of the vacation of some of Aruba's perennial visitors. Three generations of the Polsinelli Clan took up two tables for themselves for the perfect family celebration of Valentine's Day.

There were familiar and new faces amongst the more than 200 that attended the Valentine's Day Sweetheart's Dinner Dance at the Radisson Resort on Wednesday evening. Ken and Barbie (yes, that is really their names,) Varga wouldn't miss the dance, and have been attending since they began. For newcomers Keith and Pat of Dallas, Texas, they were right in their element, as they run ballroom dancing the first Sunday of every month, and they hoped that if anyone from Aruba were in their neighborhood, they would be their guests at one of their events. Aside from the delicious dinner and elegant happy hour provided by the hotel, attendees had the opportunity to win wonderful prizes, such as a one-week stay at the Playa Linda Resort during the raffle drawings, and to bid during silent auction on some very worthwhile items donated from various sources.

As each raffle winner came up to claim their prize, they reached into the barrel to pick another winner. Many were thrilled over winning the numerous beautiful pieces of jewelry donated by Colombian Emeralds and Boolchand's, Pearl Gems, Kay's Fine Jewelers, Gandelman Jewelers, and the Effy Collection. The big prize of \$2000 cash went to Dicky Chase, who had already gone home, but Joe Beckman, the second prizewinner of the big raffle was there to collect his six-carat diamond bracelet from Noble Jewelers.

While dancing to the music of Tico and the Crystal Breeze Band, who also donate their time and talent every year for the fundraiser, the guest put in their bids at the silent auction. Beautiful artistic photographs donated by noted photographer Diane Keijtzer and Rosalie Klein helped raise funds, as did a hand-painted silk scarf by Rosalie. Some savvy bidder will return to spend a week at the Aruba Beach Club, and dinners for two were donated by Madame Janette, Hostaria Da'Vittorio, El Gaucho, Chalet Swiss, Sole Mare, and Tierra Del Sol. Fitness Warehouse gave three pieces of exercise equipment, and Adventure Car Rental, Economy and Toyota all donated one week car rentals.

Art Stark, president of Friend's of the Handicapped wished to give a particular mention to islander Olga Koolman, who single handedly accounted for a substantial portion of the ticket sales for the dance. He also thanks all the members of the Friend's of the Handicapped for the time they give to this cause. Kudos go to Steve Wild, Vice Chairman and his wife Diane, Philip Solomon and Maryann La Carruba, co-treasurers, and Anoushka Maduro of Aruba and Pauline Daley, Secretary and Associate Secretary. Other board members deserving recognition include Morton Kimmel, Alma Stark, David and Tana Ulmschneider, Marcelino Kock, Sal La Carruba, and many volunteers who work hard during their vacations to see that the FOTH events are a success. Since it was started by Keith and Wilma Jones over twenty years ago, FOTH has raised over one million dollars for Aruba's disabled, establishing for themselves a special place in the hearts of the people of the island they love.